

## **INDIANA DIVISION OF FORESTRY**

### **HIGH CONSERVATION VALUE FORESTS**

The Division of Forestry designates specific areas as High Conservation Value Forests (HCVF). HCVF are forest areas that are known to possess significant concentrations of biodiversity, are regionally rare, or provide basic services of nature. Additionally, HCVF may be designated because of cultural significance.

Beginning in 2007, the Division of Forestry designated 15 areas containing a total of 2,018 acres as HCVF. All these initial areas are dedicated Nature Preserves because of their high levels of biodiversity and the fact that they are underrepresented across the state. A list of HCVF on Indiana State Forests is found in Table 1.

Management of HCVF will be directed toward maintenance or improvement of the condition for which the HCVF was designated. Management of these initial HCVF is primarily under the direction of the Division of Nature Preserves; the Division of Forestry may assist in their management when resources allow. Management activities that create disturbance generally are not conducted in Nature Preserves unless prescribed in the articles of dedication of each preserve. While many preserves may require little or no management, periodic or regular management may be required to maintain ecological integrity (e.g., prescribed fire or control of invasive species) or to maintain the character of ecologically unique disturbance-dependent communities (e.g., glades and barrens). Essential trails and roads within nature preserves are maintained in a manner that minimizes environmental impact. New trails or roads are routed to avoid nature preserves when practicable. Refer to the Division of Nature Preserves web page ([dnr.in.gov](http://dnr.in.gov)) for additional information on any Nature Preserve.

The Division of Forestry intends to continue to cooperate with the Division of Nature Preserves in the identification and dedication of additional nature preserves. The Division of Forestry proposes to automatically designate each new nature preserve on state forest land as a HCVF.

Table 1. Nature Preserves on DNR/DoF Lands.

State Forest	Nature Preserve	Acres	Communities
Clark	White Oak	133.7	Oak-hickory forest
	Virginia Pine – Chestnut Oak	19.4	Virginia pine and chestnut oak forest
	Alum Cave Hollow	164.2	Mesic forest and rocky outcroppings
Harrison-Crawford	Post Oak – Cedar	275.5	Barrens and glades
	Scout Mountain (Twin Domes Cave)	47.7	Mixed mesophytic, oak-hickory at hibernacula entrance
	Leavenworth Barrens	747.5	Barrens and glades
	Batwing Cave	10.5	Forest buffer at hibernacula entrance
	Deam's Bluff	251.9	Cliffs and oak-hickory forest
	Blue River Gravel Wash Barrens	77.6	Barrens and glades
Jackson-Washington	Indian Bitter	36.7	Mesic forest
	Knobstone Glades	58.8	Barrens and glades
Martin	Henshaw Bend	82.5	Mesic upland forest
	Tank Spring	62.9	Mesic upland forest
Morgan-Monroe	Scout Ridge	15.1	Mixed mesophytic forest
Yellowwood	Crooked Creek	34.3	Mesic forest

### Clark State Forest

More than 300 acres of Clark State Forest (CSF) are dedicated nature preserves. The smallest on CSF, Virginia Pine – Chestnut Oak Nature Preserve, is hilly and includes a ridge top. The forest is predominantly native Virginia pine on the upper slopes and chestnut-oak on the lower slopes. The understory in the preserve is sparse and includes greenbrier, poison ivy, dogwood, and sassafras. Alum Cave Hollow Nature Preserve, the largest preserve on Clark State Forest, contains siltstone cliffs and dry upland forests with native Virginia pine. White Oak Nature Preserve features oak-hickory forests with white, red, black, scarlet, post, and chestnut oaks, along with pignut, shagbark, and bitternut hickories. These Nature Preserves were selected because they contain good examples of under-represented communities that were originally found throughout the Knobstone Escarpment Section of the Highland Rim Natural Region.

### Harrison-Crawford State Forest

Six nature preserves with a total area of 1,410 acres are found on Harrison-Crawford State Forest. Two nature preserves, Batwing Cave and Scout Mountain, are designated for protection of two hibernacula of the federally

endangered Indiana bat. Scout Mountain, the larger of the two preserves, is located on a north-facing slope with mixed mesophytic hardwoods and a smaller oak-hickory component. Trees greater than 30" dbh are not uncommon in the vicinity of each hibernacula. Extensive barrens and glades – unique ecological communities under-represented throughout the Escarpment Section of the Shawnee Hills Natural Region - are found at Post Oak-Cedar and Leavenworth Barrens Nature Preserves. Prairie vegetation, dense stands of Eastern redcedar, and scattered post oak trees are common. Most trees are smaller than 30" dbh, but some larger trees are found in smaller mixed mesophytic areas of Post Oak - Cedar Nature Preserve. Prescribed burns are used to manage for barren and glade communities at each preserve. Deam Bluffs Nature Preserve is composed of limestone and sandstone cliff communities. The preserve is wooded with oaks, hickories, and redcedar found along the cliffs. Most trees are smaller than 20" dbh and stunted due to hot, dry conditions on south-facing cliffs.

### **Jackson-Washington State Forest**

Knobstone Glades Nature Preserve in Jackson County is composed of forest openings with sparse herbaceous vegetation growing on bedrock outcroppings. This unique, under-represented community features stunted, gnarled chestnut and blackjack oaks adjacent to the glades along with scattered blueberry bushes. Indian Bitter Nature Preserve is a diverse, high quality mesic forest of sugar maple, beech, oak, hickory, yellow-poplar, and basswood trees.

### **Martin State Forest**

Tank Spring Nature Preserve is a permanent fresh-water spring from a layer of limestone at the base of a sandstone cliff alcove, situated in a mesic upland forest community. Sugar maple, American beech, red oak, and basswood dominate this unique, high-quality mesic upland forest community at Tank Spring. Henshaw Bend Nature Preserve contains a high-quality mesic upland forest community situated on bluffs overlooking a bend in the East Fork of the White River. The forest community is uniquely situated on limestone bedrock and associated soils, unlike the majority of Martin State Forest that is underlain by sandstones.

### **Morgan-Monroe State Forest**

Beech-maple is the dominant forest type on Scout Ridge Nature Preserve in Monroe County. Oak-hickory is found on the western edge of the property. On the east slope, mixed mesophytic and beech-maple predominate. Understory tree species in this unique, high-quality natural area include spicebush, pawpaw, mapleleaf viburnum, red elm, and sugar maple. A tornado in 1989 severely damaged a portion of the woods.

## **ADDITIONAL HCVF UNDER CONSIDERATION**

The Backcountry Area at Morgan-Monroe/Yellowwood State Forest in Brown and Monroe Counties has been nominated for consideration as an additional HCVF. The area under consideration contains 3,014 acres.

## **History**

The area was designated as a Backcountry Area in 1981 by the Director of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. Before designation, the area was managed like all other state forests with occasional timber harvests. Much of the area was selectively harvested in the 1960's and 1970's, with little or no harvesting since. This relatively light management intensity resulted in a forest having many "old forest" features sought by outdoor enthusiasts. The purpose for the designation as a backcountry area was to provide a primitive experience for hikers and campers in an area which is not a wilderness but which approaches the current concept of a wilderness area. These were not set up as no-logging areas, but management was modified to reduce the visual impact.

## **Ecological Values**

In the 1990's the Division of Forestry established a system of old forest areas on the state forests. Six of these designated areas fell within the Yellowwood/Morgan-Monroe Backcountry Area that contain a total area of 751 acres. These areas were designed to simulate, in time, characteristics that may be similar to what old growth forest in Indiana would look like. True old growth forest is a very limited habitat type in Indiana, with no old growth stands on state forests. Because of size and stable management, state forests provide an opportunity to create stand conditions to approximate what old growth may look like.

The Backcountry Area is home to many species of conservation concern characteristic of upland forest in the Brown County Hills section of the Highland Rim Natural Region. The natural heritage database includes nine records of occurrence, including hooded warbler, worm-eating warbler, timber rattlesnake, Indiana bat and Illinois blackberry. Additionally, a high quality upland mesic and dry mesic forest of approximately 330 acres is under consideration as a dedicated nature preserve.

## **Public Comments**

The public is invited to comment on the designation or management of this candidate High Conservation Value Forest. Comments should be specific to the area under consideration. Any information specific to the following criteria would be beneficial:

(1) Rare, threatened, or endangered features, or regionally important habitats or ecosystems that may be present in the forest

(2) Regionally important or culturally significant areas

(3) Forest management plans and activities that are appropriate for maintaining, enhancing and/or restoring attributes of the area

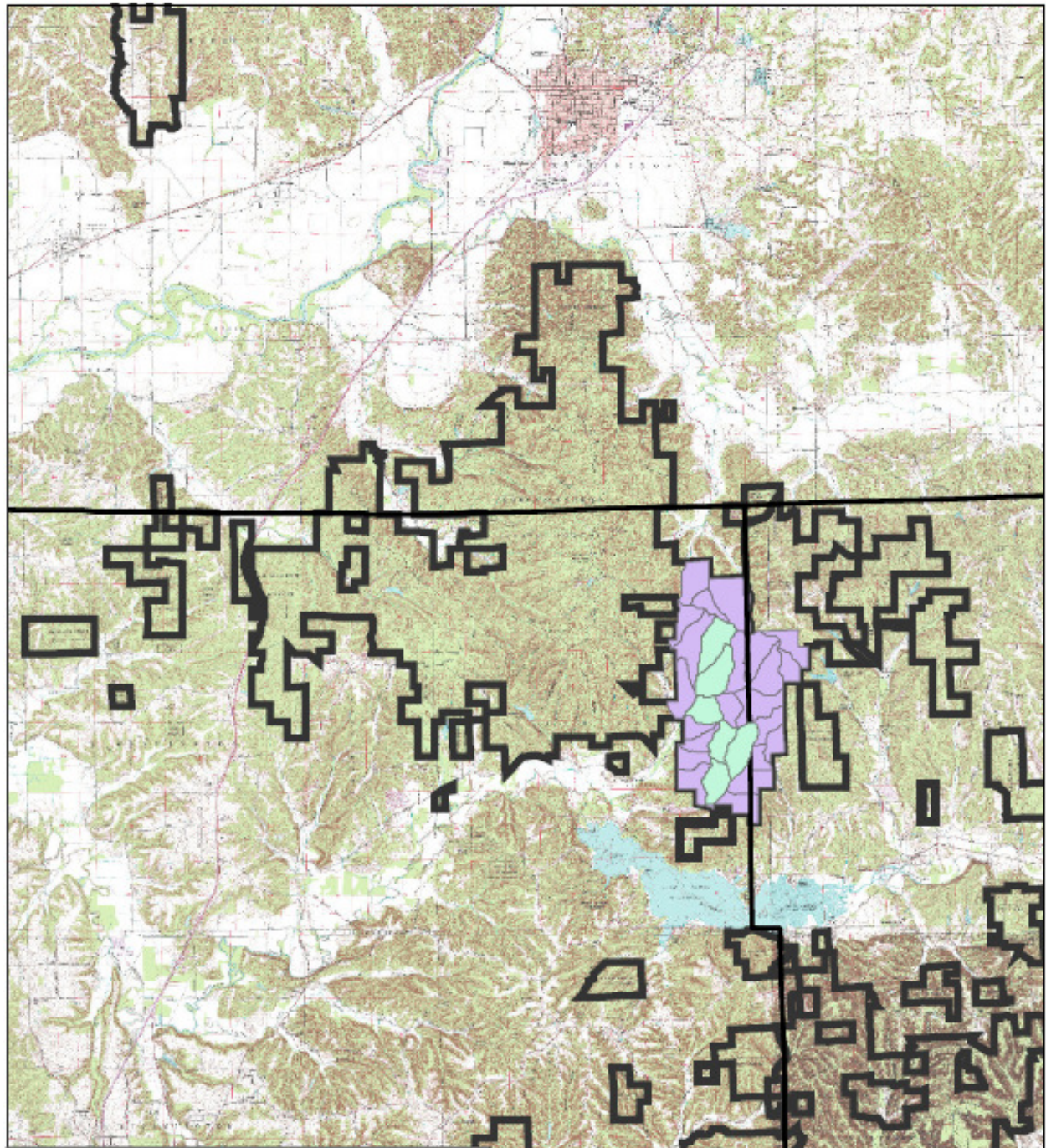
**To submit a comment on the proposed High Conservation Value Forest, click on the following link:**

**[http://www.in.gov/surveytool/public/survey.php?name=dnr\\_forestry](http://www.in.gov/surveytool/public/survey.php?name=dnr_forestry)**



You **must** indicate “Backcountry HCVF” in the “Subject or file reference” line to ensure that your comment receives appropriate consideration. Comments received within 60 days of posting will be considered.

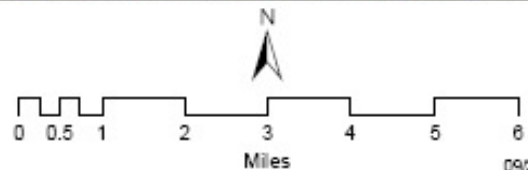


Candidate High Conservation Value Forest  
Yellowwood/Morgan-Monroe Backcountry Area - 3014 Acres  
Monroe and Brown Counties, Indiana



**Legend**

-  Old Forest Areas
-  Backcountry Area Candidate HCVF
-  Yellowwood/Morgan-Monroe State Forest



09/24/2008